

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A system for managing the copying of contents to external equipment, said system comprising:

a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

a database operable to store ~~copy~~ information regarding ~~whether copying is permissible for~~ electronic watermark information corresponding to each of said contents;

a collation unit operable to receive said identification information from said second reader, to search said database based on said identification information and to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database;

an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results; and

a controller operable to control copying of said contents to the external equipment based on said collation result;

wherein in the event said collation result indicates a matching record exists, said controller controls copying according to the content of said matching record, and in the event said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist, said controller controls copying according to said inspection results.

2. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 1 or 42, wherein said controller is operable to compress and encipher said contents and to then copy said contents to the external equipment.

3. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 1 or 42, wherein said controller and said database are connected to one another via a safe communication path.

4. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 42, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

5. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 42, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

6. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 42, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

7. (currently amended) A method for managing copying of contents to external equipment, comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

~~maintaining a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for electronic watermark information corresponding to each of said contents;~~

searching said database based on said identification information of said contents to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database; and

in the event said collation result indicates a matching record exists in said database, controlling copying according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist in said database, inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

8. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 7 or 44, wherein said steps of controlling copying include compressing and enciphering said contents and then copying said contents to the external equipment.

9. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 7 or 44, wherein said database searching step is performed via a safe communication path.

10. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 44, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

11. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 44, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

12. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 44, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

13. (currently amended) An information processing device for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said device comprising:

- a first reader operable to read in contents to be copied;

- a second reader operable to read in identification information of said contents;

- an electronic watermark inspecting unit operable to inspect electronic watermarks inserted into said contents and to produce inspection results;

- a database operable to store ~~copy~~ information regarding ~~whether copying is permissible for electronic watermark~~ information corresponding to each of said contents;

- a collation unit operable to receive said identification information from said second reader, to make

inquiry to said database based on said identification information, and to produce an inquiry result; and

a controller operable to communicate with said collation unit, to control copying of said contents according to the inquiry result and, according to the inquiry result, to either execute copying of said contents, or inspect said contents with said electronic watermark inspecting unit and control copying according to said inspection results.

14. (previously presented) An information processing device according to Claim 13 or 46, wherein said controller is operable to compress and encipher said contents and to copy said contents to the external equipment.

15. (previously presented) An information processing device according to Claim 13 or 46, wherein the communication between said controller and said collation unit is made via a safe communication path.

16. (previously presented) An information processing device according to Claim 46, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

17. (previously presented) An information processing device according to Claim 46, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

18. (previously presented) An information processing device according to Claim 46, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

19. (currently amended) A method for executing copying of contents to external equipment, comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

making inquiry to an external server based on said identification information of said contents to obtain an inquiry result, said external server storing ~~copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for electronic watermark~~ information corresponding to each of said contents; and

according to the inquiry result, either executing copying of said contents, or inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

20. (previously presented) An information processing method according to Claim 19 or 48, wherein said steps of executing copying of said contents and controlling copying of said contents include compressing and enciphering said contents and then copying said contents to the external equipment.

21. (previously presented) An information processing method according to Claim 19 or 48, wherein said inquiry to said external server is made via a safe communication path.

22. (previously presented) An information processing method according to Claim 48, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

23. (previously presented) An information processing method according to Claim 48, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

24. (previously presented) An information processing method according to Claim 48, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

25. (canceled)

26. (canceled)

27. (canceled)

28. (canceled)

29. (canceled)

30. (currently amended) A recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for managing copying of contents to external equipment, said program comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

~~maintaining a database of copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for electronic watermark information corresponding to each of said contents;~~

searching said database based on said identification information of said contents to create a collation result indicating whether a matching record exists in said database; and

in the event said collation result indicates a matching record exists in said database, controlling copying according to the content of said matching record, and, in the event said collation result indicates a matching record does not exist in said database, inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

31. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 53, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

32. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 53, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

33. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 53, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

34. (currently amended) A recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for executing copying of contents to external equipment, said program comprising:

reading in contents to be copied;

reading in identification information of said contents;

making inquiry to an external server based on said identification information of said contents to obtain an inquiry result, said external server storing ~~copy information regarding whether copying is permissible for~~ electronic watermark information corresponding to each of said contents; and

according to the inquiry result, either executing copying of said contents, or inspecting said contents for an electronic watermark inserted therein to produce inspection results, and controlling copying according to said inspection results.

35. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 55, wherein said attribute information is data comprising at least a part of said contents that has been clipped.

36. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 55, wherein said attribute information is a hash value for at least a part of said contents.

37. (previously presented) A recording medium according to Claim 55, wherein said attribute information is selected from a characteristic value and a characteristic quantity relating to said contents.

38. (canceled)

39. (canceled)

40. (canceled)

41. (canceled)

42. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a third reader operable to read in attribute information of said contents,

wherein said collation unit is further operable to receive said attribute information from said third reader, and to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

43. (canceled)

44. (currently amended) A method according to Celaim 7, further comprising:

reading in attribute information of said contents, wherein said searching step includes searching said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents to produce said collation result.

45. (canceled)

46. (currently amended) An information processing device according to Celaim 13, further comprising:

a third reader operable to read in attribute information of said contents,

wherein said collation unit is further operable to receive said attribute information from said third reader, and to make inquiry to search said database based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

47. (canceled)

48. (currently amended) A method according to Celaim 19, further comprising:

reading in attribute information of said contents, wherein said step of making inquiry includes making inquiry to said external server based on at least one of said identification information and said attribute information of said contents.

49. (canceled)

50. (canceled)

51. (canceled)

52. (canceled)

53. (currently amended) A recording medium according to
| Celaim 30, wherein said program further comprises:

reading in attribute information of said contents,

said collation unit being further operable to receive
said attribute information, and to search said database based on
at least one of said identification information and said
attribute information of said contents.

54. (canceled)

55. (currently amended) A recording medium according to
| Celaim 34, wherein said program further comprises:

reading in attribute information of said contents, and
said step of making an inquiry includes making inquiry to the
database based on at least one of said identification
information and said attribute information of said contents.

56. (canceled)

57. (canceled)

58. (canceled)

59. (canceled)

60. (canceled)